

Message Text

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44

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 AID-05 PC-01

AGR-05 IO-10 INT-05 SCCT-01 OPR-02 /096 W

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P R 212211Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 134

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 2131

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, EAGR, PINT, HO

SUBJECT: LAND INVASIONS

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 2097

1. THE CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING THE LAND INVASION BY
CAMPEsinOS BELONGING TO UNC (NATIONAL CAMPEsinO UNION)
HAS BECOME MORE HEATED AS VARIOUS SECTORS VOICE THEIR
VIEWPOINTS. AS A RESULT OF THE CONTROVERSY, THE CHIEF OF
STATE AND THE SUPERIOR DEFENSE COUNCIL ISSUED A DECLARATION
ON MAY 21 CONTAINING THE FOLLOWING MAIN POINTS:

A. REITERATED FULL SUPPORT FOR THE NATIONAL AGRARIAN
INSTITUTE (INA);

B. APPOINTED A COMMISSION COMPOSED OF DEFMIN COLONEL
MARIO CHINCHILLA, LT. COLONEL OMAR ZELAYA AND
LT. COLONEL JUAN ARIAS TO MEET WITH INA EXECUTIEVES
AND UNC LEADERS TO WORK OUT A SOLUTION OF THE
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PROBLEM; AND

C. REITERATED DETERMINATION OT IMPLEMENT AGRARIAN
REFORM PLAN TO PROMOTE SOCIAL GAINS PROVIDED
RESPECT FOR LAW AND ORDER IS MAINTAINED.

2. COHEP (HONDURAN COUNCIL OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE) ISSUED
A DECLARATION OF MAY 20 AFTER A SIX HOUR MEETING. IT CALLED
ON THE GOVERNMENT TO STOP THE LAND INVASIONS AND POINTED OUT
THAT SUCH LAND INVASIONS WERE ILLEGAL UNDER THE AGRARIAN
REFORM LAW. IT ENDED BY SAYING THAT THE RESULTS OF THE
CONFRONTATION WOULD DETERMINE WHETHER THE COUNTRY WILL BE
ABLE TO LIVE WITHIN A STRUCTURE OF LAW AND ORDER.

3. THE ANACH (THE LARGEST HONDURAN CAMPESINO ORGANIZATION)
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MET ON MAY 20 TO CONSIDER THE SITUATION.
THE COMMITTEE STATED THAT IT SYMPATHIZED WITH THE
CAMPESINOS WHO FELT DRIVEN TO OCCUPY LAND, BUT SAID THAT
ANACH IS OPPOSED TO LAND INVASION. IT EMPHASIZED THAT INA
IS THE ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING AGRARIAN
REFORM, BUT POINTED OUT THAT LAND INVASIONS WOULD BE BEYOND
ANACH CONTROL IF INA DOES NOT ACT SOON TO CARRY OUT THE LAW.

4. UNC ISSUED A LONG DECLARATION THAT SET FORTH THE REASONS
FOR ITS DECISION TO SPONSOR LAND INVASIONS. BASICALLY, IT
BLAMES INA AND ITS DIRECTOR, LT. COLONEL MARIO MALDONADO,
FOR FAILING TO FULFILL AN APRIL 28 AGREEMENT TO DISTRIBUTE
NATIONAL LAND TO CAMPESINOS BY MAY 10. THE DECLARATION
GOES ON TO SAY THAT UNC WAS FORCED TO TAKE ACTION BECUASE
LAND WAS NEEDED IMMEDIATELY FOR PLANTING PURPOSES. IT
END BY SAYING THAT THE MEMBERS OF UNC ARE READY TO SACRI-
FICE THEMSELVES IN ORDER TO ELIMINATE THE PRESENT "SITUATION
OF MISERY AND SHAME."

5. CONSERVATIVE LA PRENSA OF MAY 21 CARRIES A FRONT PAGE
EDITORIAL CALLING FOR THE ELIMINATION OF "FOREIGNERS" FROM
THE INA BUREAUCRACY BECAUSE THEY ARE AGITATORS. THE INSIDE
LA PRENSA EDITORIAL LAMENTS THE ADVENT OF NEW LAND INVASIONS
AND CALLS ON THE GOVERNMENT TO ACT WITH ALL NECESSARY FIRM-
NESS TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER. LIBERAL TIEMPO'S EDITORIAL
ASKS THE QUESTION, "WHETHER THE POLICY OF THE ARMED FORCES
HAS FAILED," IN LIGHT OF THE INVASIONS CAUSED BY THE
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FRUSTRATION AND LACK OF CONFINDENCE OF CAMPESINOS IN THE NEW
GOVERNMENT.

6. INA DIRECTOR MALDONADO GAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE ON THE
MORNING OF MAY 21. HE SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN ONLY 38
INVASIONS RATHER THAN THE 108 REPORTED IN THE PRESS. HE
ADMITTED THAT UNC APPARENTLY HAD A POLITICAL MOTIVE IN
ATTEMPTING TO REMOVE HIM AS HEAD OF INA. HE EMPHASIZED

THAT THE GOH WOULD DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO AVOID CONFRONTATIONS AND THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD. MALDONADO SAID THAT THE CHIEF OF STATE AND SUPERIOR DEFENSE COUNCIL BACK INA'S ATTEMPT TO IMPLEMENT THE AGRARIAN REFORM LAW. HE ADMITTED THAT IF ALL ELSE FAILED IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO DISLODGE CAMPESINO INVADERS AS STATED IN THE AGRARIAN REFORM LAW.

7. COMMENT: IT IS CLEAR THAT UNC IS ATTEMPTING TO APPROPRIATE THE BANNER OF AGRARIAN REFORM. THE ORGANIZATION IS PRESENTING ITSELF AS THE DEFENDER OF THE CAMPESINOS AS A CLASS AGAINST THE SO-CALLED BROKEN PROMISES OF INA AND MALDONADO. IN A VERY REAL SENSE, IT IS CHALLENGING THE GOH ON A MATTER THAT IS OF BASIC CONCERN TO THE GOVERNMENT. THE WAY IN WHICH THE GOVERNMENT RESPONDS TO THE SITUATION WILL BE INDICATIVE OF ITS FUTURE ACTION VIS-A-VIS THE VARIOUS SECTIONS OF HONDURAN SOCIETY.
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